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Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov Shows Soft Side With New Set of Poetry

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Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov.

Aspiring poet Sergei Lavrov, who happens also to be Russia's foreign minister, released a series of poems Wednesday on the theme of emigration and the impossibility of ever truly leaving Russia behind.

One of the poems, published by Russky Pioner magazine, was written in 1995 — a time when Lavrov says "it seemed the whole country would slip away into the abroad."

The work describes the sense of loss Russia suffered at the end of the 20th century, when many of its citizens left the country. It reads woefully: "Guess, where are the bridges for immigrants of the last wave to return?"

The other two poems are devoted to a friend of Lavrov's who moved to New York in 1989, shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The first is about how the friend left the Soviet Union behind to work for its mission to the United Nation. "It is impossible to overpower the cord that ties you to your land, just as you cannot overpower yourself, even if you think you have already done so," the piece reads, employing a series of metaphors to describe the difficulty of leaving Russia behind.

The other discusses his friend's return to post-Soviet Russia in 1996: "As though it was yesterday when the whole country was torn apart by winds. This country is gone, but pride has somehow remained within us."

Lavrov has a well-known love of poetry. He previously published a series of poems in Russky Pioner in 2012. In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a poetry compilation, featuring the works of Lavrov and other Russian diplomats.

Lavrov also authored the lyrics of the anthem of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, the alma mater of many Russian diplomats.

Lavrov is not the only Russian minister known for his love of verse. Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev has published two books of poetry: "Fire and Reflection" in 2002, and "A Foreign Shore" in 2012.

Writing in general seems to be a popular pastime among Russia's ruling elite. President Vladimir Putin's aide Vladislav Surkov has published a number of articles and also allegedly penned a novel, "Almost Zero," in 2009 under the pseudonym Natan Dubovitsky, the male form of his wife's surname.

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